

CM slammed for labelling NGO chief 'an old man'

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Penang Wanita MCA has lambasted Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng for labelling a veteran NGO activist as an "old man" over the latter's comment that the state government did not practise public consultation.

The wing's state chief Tan Cheng Liang (left) has come to the defence of the Consumers Association of Penang, criticising Lim for not only refusing to accept the NGO's comments, but also dismissing its president SM Mohamed Idris as an "old man".

"This reveals his rudeness and arrogant attitude," said the former Jawi assemblyperson in a statement today.

Mohamed Idris had recently pointed out that several major road construction projects proposed for Penang had not gone through public consultations.

Lim, who is DAP secretary-general, had hit back at Mohamed Idris by saying that this was not the first time that the latter had "made a mistake".

He added that previously Mohamed Idris (right) had accused the state government of building a theme park on gazetted forest land in Teluk Bahang.

"This was an untrue claim for which he later apologised.

"I never revealed his repeated apologies because he is an old man and a respected figure so we let the matter rest," Lim had told reporters then.

Only normal briefing by state exco members

The projects which sparked the controversy include the 6.5km Gurney Drive-Bagan Ajam undersea tunnel, the 12km road connecting Tanjung Bungah-Teluk Bahang, a 4.2km Gurney Drive-Lebuhraya Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu bypass and a 4.6km Lebuhraya Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu-Bandar Baru Air Itam bypass.

Tan said unfortunately, Lim had refused to accept the criticism but had countered every issue that NGOs try to highlight to the state government.

"If the mega-projects are built regardless of the effects against the ecosystem, it will affect the next generation," said Tan, who is Wanita MCA deputy secretary-general.

Meanwhile, Tan agreed with CAP that the state merely provided ordinary reports to the NGOs on the construction of the mega-projects to ease traffic congestion in Penang.

She added that the introductions by the state executive council on the projects were merely "normal briefings" and not public consultation.

If the Penang government is truly following the Competency, Accountability and Transparency (CAT) policy, then they should seek public consultation before launching the projects, she stressed.

"Public consultation means the state government should collect the rakyat's opinion and then make the decision," she said.

"Unfortunately, Lim Guan Eng did not accept the suggestion and advice by CAP," she added.

"This is parallel to the Lynas issue. Why does Lim only knows how to oppose the Lynas plant (in Kuantan)

while he himself is ignoring public consultation?" she queried.

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